

*Washington, DC* - The House Committee on Natural Resources today approved a bill authored by Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) that would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park system. The committee's passage of Hinchey's bill, H.R. 4003, the Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act, follows a hearing that the panel's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held on the bill on January 21.

"Those of us who live and work in the Hudson River Valley know the extraordinary natural beauty and rich history that our region possesses. A National Park Service designation would help to more accurately reflect those extraordinary resources and put the region on a more prominent national stage," Hinchey said. "In addition to enhancing our region's national identity, a National Park Service designation would make the area eligible for a vast increase in federal resources and support. With the House Committee on Natural Resources' approval of the bill today, we are one significant step closer toward securing final passage of this very significant piece of legislation that would help pave the way for the Hudson River Valley to receive its proper national recognition. I will now be working with Chairman Rahall and members of the House leadership to try to schedule a time for this bill to come up for a vote before the full House."

In order for the Hudson River Valley to become part of the National Park System, a congressionally-authorized NPS study must be conducted. Hinchey's legislation would authorize such a study from Fort Edward in Washington County down through Westchester County. If the NPS's study finds that the Hudson

River Valley would be a good fit as part of the National Park System then subsequent legislation would be needed to make that designation. Hinchey said he would immediately introduce the necessary legislation.

Hinchey's bill outlines specific guidelines to ensure that the NPS study recognizes the realities of the Hudson River Valley. These guidelines require the NPS to closely examine park unit models, in particular national river and recreation areas, as well as other landscape protection models, that: encompass large areas of non-federal lands within their designated boundaries; foster public and private collaborative arrangements for achieving NPS objectives, and protect and respect the rights of private land owners. No forced land acquisition activities would be permitted.

Hinchey has long sought greater recognition, protection, and resources for the Hudson River Valley. As a member of the New York State Assembly, Hinchey authored the legislation that led to the creation of the Hudson River Valley Greenway and in Congress he authored legislation that led to the designation of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which provides technical assistance to local communities or local managers to assist them in managing natural and historic sites of national importance.